

Santa Barbara City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness and Community Relations

June 7, 2011

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA

Council Members Present: Helene Schneider, Bendy White

Staff Present: Jim Armstrong, Paul Casey, Steve Wiley, Brian Bosse, Nancy Rapp, Sergeant James Pfleging, Sue Gray, Deirdre Randolph

Stakeholders Present: Alan Bleecker (Milpas Community Association), Mike Foley (Casa Esperanza), Deborah Schwartz (Planning Commission), Bill Collyer (Downtown Organization), Wayne Mellenger (CLUE)

1. OPENING COMMENTS, WELCOME: Helene Schneider
Self-introductions of those in attendance.
2. COMMON GROUND RESULTS – ROB FREDERICKS, HOUSING AUTHORITY
Rob reported that Santa Barbara City is the most impacted area of the County with 67.71% of the total homeless count. 47% of those stated that they were from Santa Barbara County before becoming homeless. Count specifics included the following:
1,040 people encountered
754 surveys were completed
640 of those were deemed to be “vulnerable”
Homeless for at Least 6 Months *Plus* One or More of the Following Markers:
 1. Three (3) or more hospitalizations or ER visits in the past year
 2. Three (3) or more ER visits in the previous three months
 3. Liver disease
 4. End stage Renal disease
 5. HIV+/AIDS
 6. Age 50 or older
 7. Veteran
 8. History of cold weather injury (hot weather injury)
 9. Dual diagnosis and tri-morbidity:
– Co-occurring psychiatric, substance abuse, and chronic medical condition
Since the survey week, 8 individuals have been housed (2 from the Top 100 Vulnerable List)

The Common Ground work continues. Congregations are doing outreach, there is a Housing Placement Work Group, and work group meetings are being held.

The data base will be maintained by SB County Public Health.
3. HOMELESS COORDINATOR INFORMATION – SUE GRAY
At the last meeting the subcommittee asked staff to report back on information regarding homeless coordinator positions in other jurisdictions. Sue Gray reported that it was difficult to find communities who had an employee working strictly with homeless issues. \$100,000

was the estimated annual salary for staff whose jobs could be classified as “homeless coordinators”.

Ventura has one full time Community Services Manager pay scale ranging from \$80K - \$112K) which is funded 100% from the from General Fund. Approximately 60% - 70% of his time is spent on homeless issues. Ventura does not currently have a City database for chronic offenders. They estimate that they have approximately 500 homeless concentrated in one area of the City.

Santa Monica employs a Homeless Services Administrator (pay scale ranging from \$86K - \$106K) and 4 FTE staff (including 1 FT HMIS database Analyst). These employees handle all aspects of homelessness in the city.

All except the database position are paid 100% from General Fund. Santa Monica has a very high sales tax (10.25%) and a very large business license fee which helps support the City’s programs.

Glendale has a Senior Administrative Analyst/Homeless Coordinator position (pay scale ranging from \$60,000 - \$87,000).

It was suggested that San Luis Obispo County and Monterrey County be researched as well.

4. DATABASE INFORMATION – SUE GRAY

The County of Santa Barbara administers a HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS) database which is required for the Continuum of Care funds. They recently received a \$100K grant to upgrade the system.

Santa Monica’s HMIS System is “Service Point”. They recommend that all parties help the County select the vendor for the upgrade so that information can be easily shared.

Santa Maria’s Good Samaritan program uses a web-based program that is capable of interacting with HMIS for HUD-required downloads. It costs +/- \$1,500/month for this custom designed program.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

This item was carried over to the next meeting because not all three council members were present. However, public comment and general discussion points are included below.

6. UPDATE ON STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES RELATED TO HOMELESSNESS

Bill Collyer from the Downtown Organization presented its “State Street Panhandling Study”. The study consisted of a survey conducted on State Street between March 10 and April 8 (M-F @ 2:00 p.m.). For each block (East side and West side of State Street), a count was made of panhandling instances (not people).

7. PUBLIC COMMENT & GROUP DISCUSSION

Glen: Most homeless people are good. They need a place to go in the morning. They are ticketed because they don’t have anywhere to go.

Dave: More police are being hired. In addition to Officer Hove, another restorative officer is being hired, plus three outreach workers, plus six community service officers. Coordination is the key. There was also approval to hire 3 more sworn officers but the funding (\$450K) needs to be found in the General Fund.

Mike: How are outcomes going to be measured for Restorative Policing? A metric needs to be defined. As of July 1st existing street outreach ends.

Bendy: Due to the concentration of homeless in the City, the Coordinator will probably be the responsibility of the City.

Helene: Without a third councilmember we can't make any decisions today, but regarding the database, what we want is access to data. We need one good database. We don't want/need to start something new, but our goal must be to have access.

Sue: We could work with the County in choosing the system. If we have a say in it, then later we can see if it would be worthwhile to expand upon it ourselves.

Bendy: Our staff needs to talk to the County staff, but we need to see how the Coordination Piece ends up first.

Alan: A Coordinator is needed. The City must take the lead, but we don't know where best to get the most leverage.

Deborah: Task Force on Gangs is a good model. Key Coordinator does not report to City.

Food Distribution: There isn't any money to start something new right now

Bendy: Alternative Giving Program is not functioning well.

Brian: As of March there was about \$20,000 left of the RDA grant.

Bendy: Keep as is for now but suspend the texting piece.

Brian: The 2nd phase was to get money from boxes and continue the educational component.

Emily: Need buy-in of volunteers. We didn't see that with Real Change.

Mike: City Council should make strong statements individually and collectively. Should be serious about it. Ask why Real Change didn't work: One person was not in charge or accountable, no community buy-in.

Brian: There was buy-in at the beginning. Only the DO, RDA and Council stepped up.

Helene: Going forward would not be seen as good use of funds. HLC box approval, more money, etc. Hold off on Phase II.

Big Question: Coordination of Homeless Efforts: Where housed? How funded? Modeled on Gang Task Force?

Alan: Analyze money – total spent on homeless from all sources.

8. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING – TBD

9. ADJOURN